

**Suggested Talking Points**  
**USAID Program Officer Laura Coughlin**  
**Tamontaka 3 Water System**  
**Brgy. Tamontaka 3, Cotabato City**  
**BIP Turn-over Ceremony**  
**April 24, 2008**

Honorable Mayor of Cotabato City,  
MEDCo Representative,  
Local Government Officials,  
USG and GEM Program Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

- On behalf of the American people, congratulations and warm wishes to the people of Barangay Tamontaka 3 and the City of Cotabato on this inaugural event.
- The Tamontaka 3 Water System project was undertaken to help expand the service area of the Metro Cotabato Water District to provide more residents with a safe and convenient water supply. Less than half of Filipinos have access safe drinking water in their homes, most have no access to adequate sanitation. This problem poses major health, economic and environmental concerns. Water pollution and inadequate sanitation costs the Philippine economy over \$1.9 billion (almost 80 billion Pesos) each year in lost income and medical expenses. And 31 Filipinos – mostly children – die each day from waterborne diseases.
- The solution to this problem is to improve access, throughout the country, to clean water and adequate sanitation, and in this regard, the Philippine Government has committed itself to achieving the Millennium Development Goal of cutting by

half the percentage of Filipinos without access to water and sanitation.

- This project is very special because it is the product of a partnership between USAID, the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo), and the Local Government of Cotabato City. The U.S. Government is proud to be a friend and partner of the Filipino people in bringing prosperity and development to Mindanao.
- The Tamontaka 3 Water System Expansion is one of 28 infrastructure projects completed in the City of Cotabato, and one of about 870 infrastructure projects the American people helped to build in Mindanao this year. Throughout Mindanao the USG is helping to provide electricity to families in remote barangays, improve education, develop better health services, and conserve the environment.
- Thanks to the Metro Cotabato Water District and the local government of Cotabato City for their commitment to operate and maintain the water system so that you and your children will be able to use it for years to come.
- Through projects such as this, the United States of America reaffirms its commitment to the vision of a peaceful, productive and prosperous Cotabato City and Mindanao.
- On behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, I would like to thank you, Mayor Muslimin Sema, and all the other local government officials present here today, for your collaboration and warm hospitality.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

